

From: Paul Speranza
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/28/02 7:45pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

January 28, 2002

Attorney General John Ashcroft

U.S. Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Ashcroft,

I am writing in response to the public comment period for the Microsoft antitrust trial. I would like to urge you to please end this lawsuit as soon as possible

The settlement will definitely promote competition in the technology industry, if not hindering Microsoft's own competitive abilities. Microsoft will divulge their interfaces and protocols, and will share it with competitors. , and consumers will be given more choices when using the Windows operating system.

This witch-hunt needs to be ended, and our computer industry needs to be restored. Please uphold this settlement.

Attached please find an email that I originally sent to my state attorney general, Mr. Richard Blumenthal, who never even saw to it that I at least received an acknowledgment.

Sincerely,

Paul Speranza

Vice President

All Systems Go, Inc.

CC: fin@mobilizationoffice.com@inetgw

Mr. Blumenthal,

I would like to comment on some of the proposed remedies that you and the other eight states have suggested in the Microsoft anti-trust case. Please bear in mind that I am referring to an Infoworld.com article for the points that I am addressing.

1) Allowing other companies to port Office to other platforms.

This is no small feat. That is probably why Microsoft has a separate Macintosh team that develops Office for the Mac. They have to do this because code running on Windows will not run on the Macintosh or any other platform. Did you know that the Mac version is always months behind the newest Windows version? Since the Mac is a completely different operating system that means that the developers get no help from the core Windows developers (The Chinese Wall?). Here Microsoft has succeeded only because they have the best product of its type on the Mac.

There is no way to stop anyone from cloning Office. Good luck to anyone that tries. The product is so massive you would need a small army of developers to do it. There is a clone of Outlook for the Linux operating system from Ximian (<http://www.ximian.com>). Microsoft has not stopped them from doing so. By the way, this company is cloning Microsoft's new .Net Framework for Linux, and as far as I know Microsoft is somehow lending support.

Why would you want to allow someone to clone software from other companies? Where is there innovation in that? Sun Microsystems offers Star Office for free, developed by open source developers. It is compatible with the Office file formats which Microsoft publishes. Why aren't companies dumping Office for Star Office in droves when Microsoft charges several hundred dollars? It's because over the years programs like Word have evolved to be much more than a word processor. The programs in Office work together to build entire applications based on all of the pieces. You can open up a Word document and in it could be an Excel spreadsheet that you can update without ever knowing you were using Excel. This has evolved over the years and is by no means trivial to do.

As far as the logic that it is too expensive for companies to change to a free product because of training costs, I'm not buying that. Is that supposed to be Microsoft's fault? In a recent interview, Scott McNealy from Sun Microsystems said that large corporations aren't using Star Office mainly because it is free and the customers didn't think Sun would be committed to supporting a free product. So now Sun is contemplating charging for it.

2) Allow for a stripped down version of Windows at a cheaper price.

What for? Microsoft spends a lot of R&D time and money developing the extras that they give you for free. So if you got a version without the freebies does this mean Microsoft has to pay for not putting in programs that they are giving away? Here is the problem with including only products from other companies? Microsoft's updates to IE, Media Player, etc. are always free for the downloading. RealPlayer, for example, offers a functional yet hobbled version of their software and then gets you to pay for upgrades and newer versions. So does Opera with their web browser. So where is the consumer winning here? With MS I get the feature complete versions of a browser and Media Player for free, with

the competitors what initially is free may not be over time if I want versions with more features.

I think what Microsoft did with the PC manufacturers was a great idea: Include all of their products but put whatever competitor's products you want in also.

3) Make IE an open source product.

Why? That browser is still the best browser out there. Mozilla is open source and is free. Why aren't people downloading that in droves?

Here is a little software history for you.

Wordstar was the leading word processor. They got fat and happy with their product and did not update it. Along comes Word Perfect with many new features. Bye, bye Wordstar.

Microsoft releases Windows 3.1. Word Perfect does not create a windows version. Microsoft releases Word for Windows and it is a hit. Word Perfect releases a Windows version 2 years later full of bugs. Bye, bye Word Perfect. Corel owns Word Perfect now. They tried to create a Java version of it so it would run on any computer. You know what they found? Although Java is great for backroom systems, the front end interface that a user sees is way too slow to be usable. Sun Microsystems? Star Office, which works on any computer, still needs to have direct ties to the platform it is running on to be usable. Shame on Microsoft for writing great software that runs on Windows.

Microsoft releases Windows 3.1. Lotus, after being begged by Microsoft to do a Windows version to prove the value of Windows, does not. Microsoft releases Excel for Windows, which was already on the Macintosh for years, and it is a hit. Lotus releases a Windows version 2 years later full of bugs. Bye, bye Lotus 123.

Ashton Tate had a program called dBase III Plus. They got fat and happy with their product and did not update it. Along comes Foxpro from Fox software and Clipper from Nantucket software. Bye, bye dBase. Microsoft did buy Fox many years later. Computer Associates bought Clipper. Borland bought dBase, released a lousy version 4, tried to release version 5.

See the pattern yet? Stay with me now.

Netscape releases Navigator, a web browser and sells millions at 50 bucks a pop, gets fat and happy with their product and did not update it. Microsoft releases a better browser called IE 4. Netscape, still fat and happy with their product, does not update it. AOL builds their client software around IE. Microsoft releases IE 5 with excellent functionality and great hooks for developers trying to build browser applications. Netscape, still fat and happy with their product, does not update it but decides to give it away. Netscape gets bought by AOL. Microsoft releases IE 5.5 with even better features and developer hooks. AOL releases another version of their client using IE, not their own. Netscape/AOL

releases version 6. Full of bugs and slow as hell. A year later Netscape/AOL releases 6.1, slightly better. AOL client 7.0 released, still using IE I think. Netscape/AOL releases 6.2, finally acceptable.

Oh, and before I forget. Because Netscape 4.x was such a lousy browser, companies waste millions in development costs trying to keep websites and web applications compatible with it and the newer browsers. As for the innovative features and improvements that Microsoft put into their browser, most have been adapted by the W3C standards body. All of the newest browsers support those features. As a matter of fact, the new Netscape boasts that they are 100% standards compliant, but they have implemented a few non standard Microsoft features that they feel are very useful.

Why should they release an open source version of it? Did you know that under Windows developers can build IE right into their applications? That means a developer can use Microsoft's product to enhance their own. Not one of the other browsers does that! You see, where Netscape targeted the consumer, Microsoft targeted the consumer as well as the developer that has to create the applications the consumer uses.

So what has Microsoft done wrong here? Oh, yeah, they gave us a free browser with Windows.

So in closing I would like to say that I think the nine states are really going radical here, and I now think it is a witch hunt. I almost want to compare it to what happened with the tobacco companies. Microsoft is sitting there with 30 billion dollars in the bank and people want some of it. To me the feds have gotten about all that is worth getting. I could go on and on but I won't.

I hope that you will at least consider my comments. In case you didn't notice, I am a software developer. My experience is mostly with Microsoft products, but I have done development using Sun and Netscape products also. I would appreciate a confirmation that you have received this email. If you would like to contact me please feel free to do so.

Paul Speranza

Vice President

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